

Minna Birman, At The Age Of 5 At The Dacha Of Her Kindergarten



This is me, Minna Birman, at the age of 5 (sitting in the center in the foreground, with my head shaved) at the dacha of my kindergarten. This photo was taken in Odessa, in 1928.

I was born in Yelisavetgrad [Kirovograd from 1924] on 2 January 1923. In early 1924 my parents came to Odessa. On 19 February 1927 my brother Ilia was born in Odessa. We lived in 12, Lenin Street then. My mother was ill after childbirth and the baby screamed all the time. I remember coming to his bed and dumping all my toys into his bed: it was a doll crockery tin set. My parents talked me off since I scratched the baby. Ilia's birth was a trauma for me. I believed he was loved more. At the age of 3 I went to the kindergarten of leather craftsmen in 25, Yekaterininskaya Street. The kindergarten was one block away from where we lived. I remember my father teaching me to be on my own. He didn't hold me by my hand, but walked fast ahead of me. I followed him gazing at his gray head. There was a noise orchestra in our kindergarten. We played triangles, castanets and tambourines. In summer the kindergarten went to a dacha. We lay in the sun, bathed in the sea, played and had meals outside. My mother always shaved my head to avoid the risk of fleas.